CALIBER PRESS

NEGATIVE BURN

an anthology

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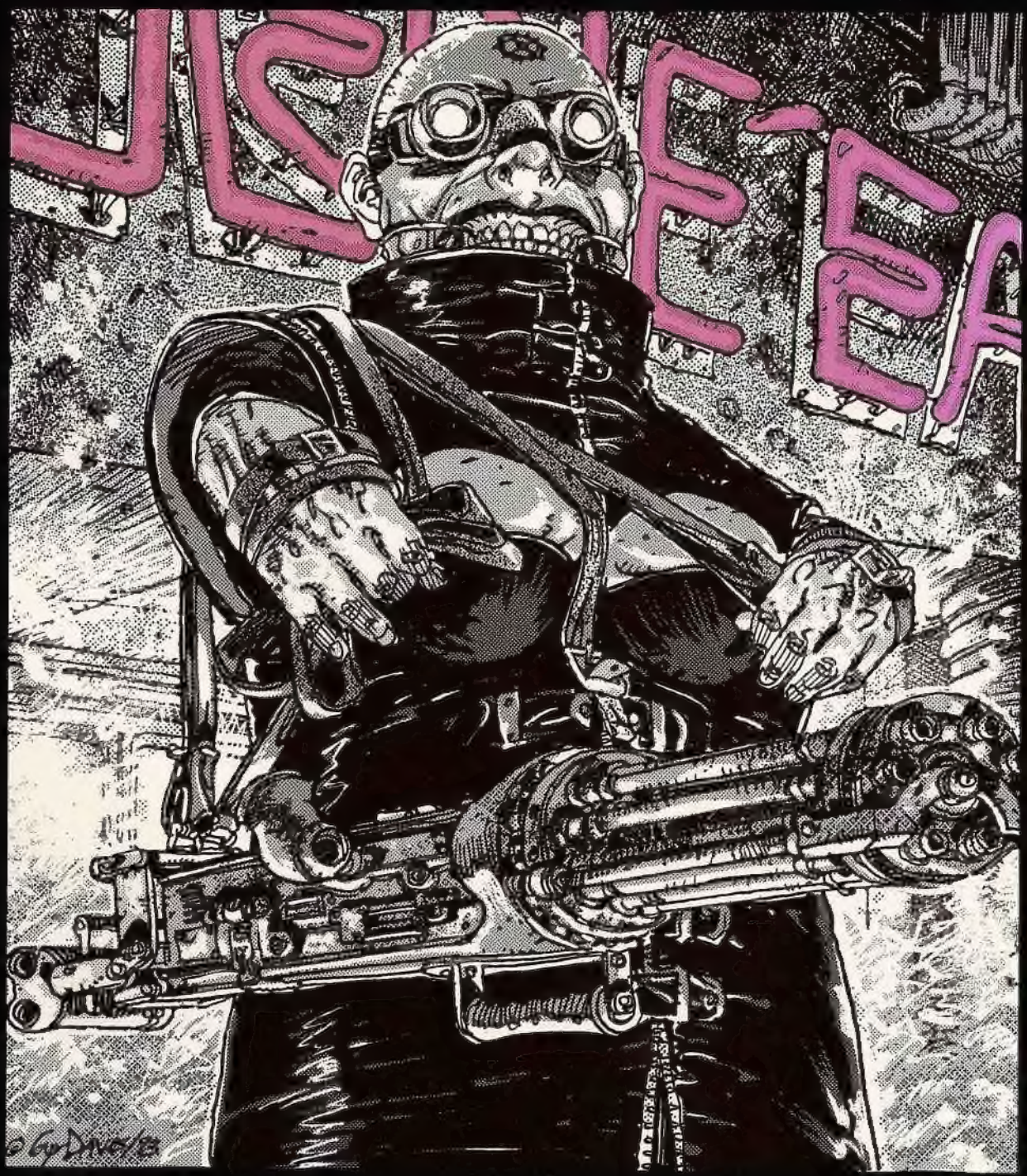

NEGATIVE BURN

VOLUME ONE
NUMBER FIVE

an anthology

Joe Pruett and Charles Moore /Editors

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written by James Pruett
illustrated by Avido Khahaifa

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written and illustrated by Brian Bolland

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written by Doug Wheeler
illustrated by Stewart Stanyard

DRAGOON ..... Page 25
written by Greg Kendrick
illustrated by Scooter Tidwell

PROJECT HIGH ..... Page 31
written and illustrated by Ken Meyer Jr.

Cover Art by Guy Davis

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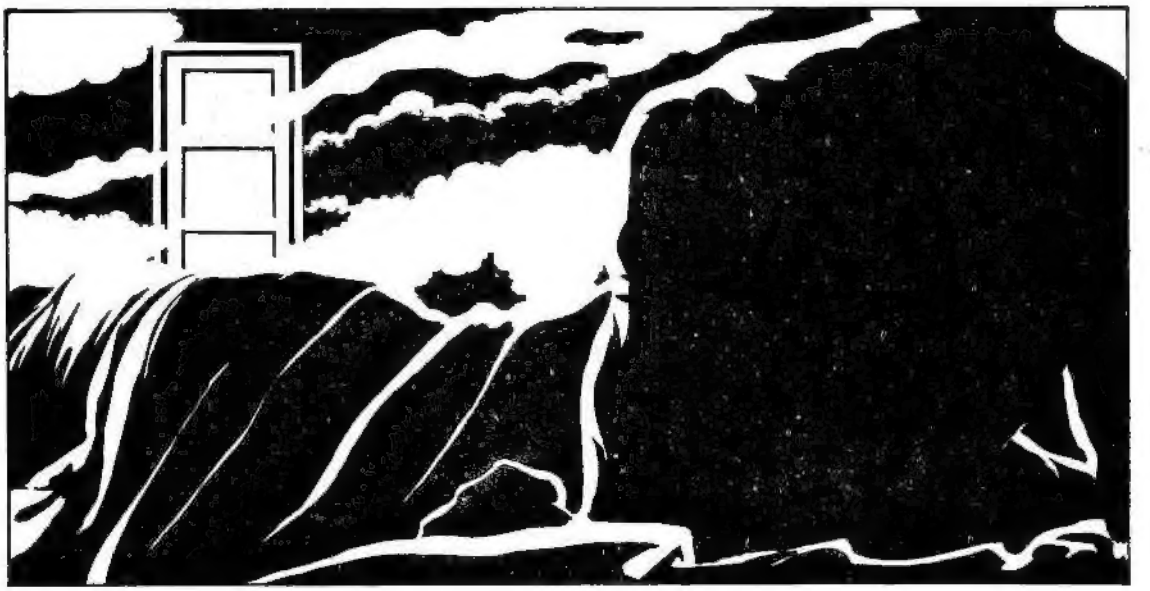
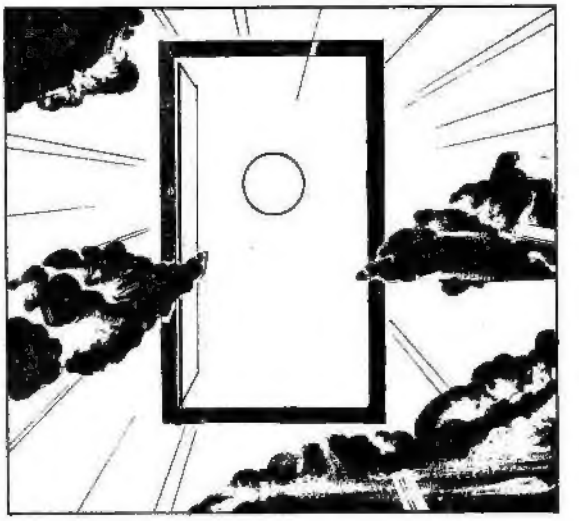
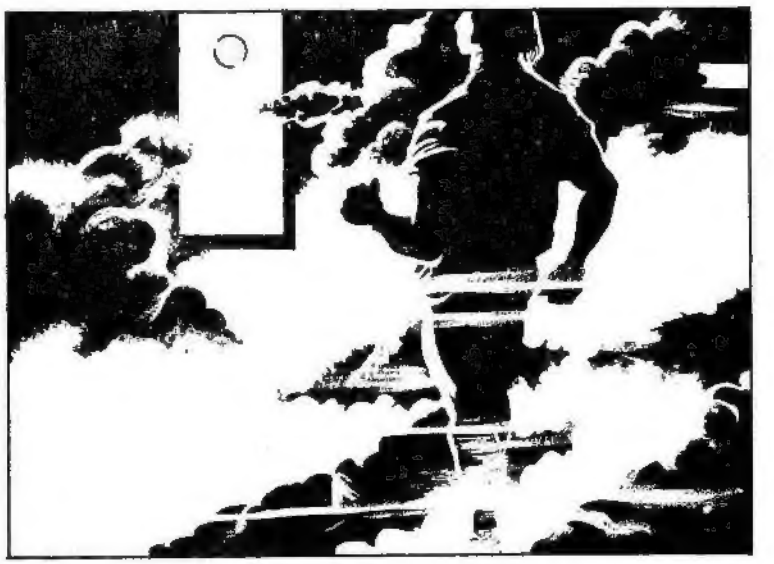
6:47 A.M.
To Buddy
I love you
Jeremy
SOJOURN

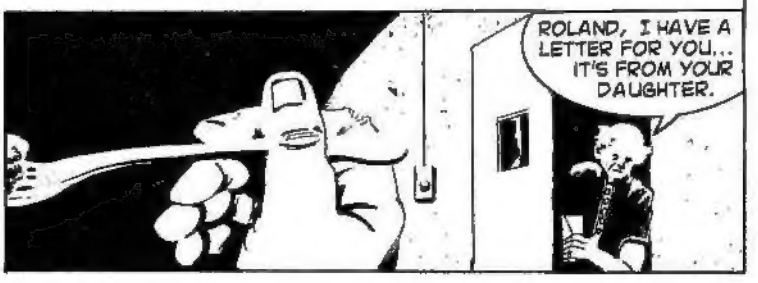






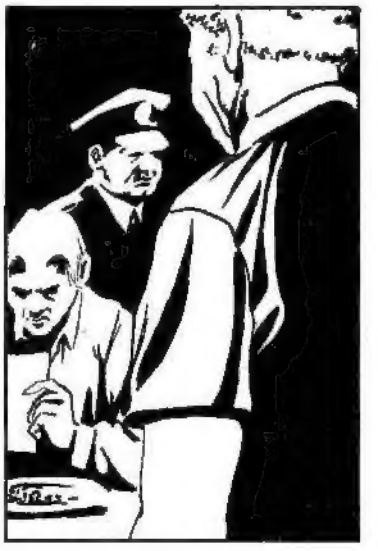
NO! ROLAND DON'T!
SLAM

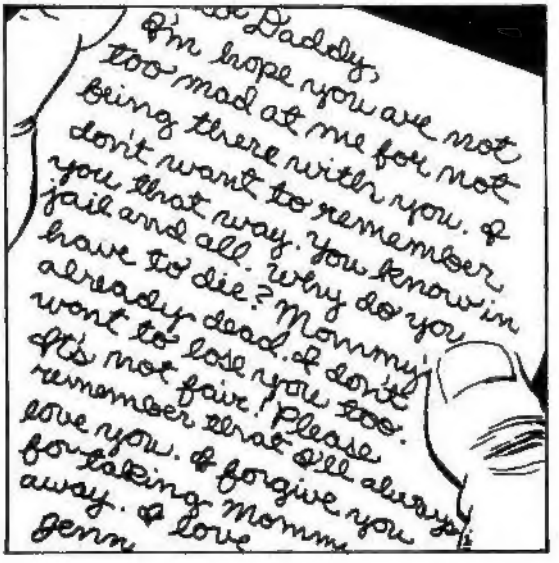
I KNOW YOU WANTED HER TO BE HERE... PLEASE CONSIDER HER *DIFFICULTY* IN DEALING WITH YOUR *PREDICAMENT!*


ROLAND, I HAVE A LETTER FOR YOU... IT'S FROM YOUR DAUGHTER.

YOU THINK *I DON'T REALIZE* THAT! IF I *COULD* DO IT OVER AGAIN DON'T YOU THINK I'D *CHANGE* THINGS?!
I LOVED MY WIFE.

I'M TRULY SORRY.




Dear Daddy,
I'm hope you are not too mad at me for not being there with you. I don't want to remember you that way. You know in jail and all. Why do you have to die? Mommy already dead. I don't wont to lose you too. It's not fair! Please remember that I'll always love you. I forgive you for taking Mommy away. I love
Jenn

BLESSED BE THY FAITH FOR WHAT AWAITS YOU BEYOND TOMORROW.

4:21 A.M.
ROLAND...
ENTER THE REALM OF YOUR DREAMS.
EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES WITHIN YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS.
SLAM

WELCOME, ROLAND. WELCOME TO YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS. WELCOME TO INFINITY.

I AM SOJOURN.

IS THIS... DEATH?
THIS IS NOT THE CULMINATION OF YOUR LIFE. IT IS MERELY THE BEGINNING OF YOUR NEXT EXISTENCE.
YOU MEAN... LIKE REINCARNATION?

REINCARNATION INVOLVES THE REBIRTH OF A SOUL IN ANOTHER LIVING BEING... WHAT WE ARE SPEAKING OF IS MORE SIMILAR TO ETERNAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

EACH PERSON CONTINUES TO EXIST FOR AS LONG AS THERE IS SPACE AND TIME...

...FOR EVEN IF YOU DIE IN ONE WORLD THERE IS ANOTHER WHERE YOU DO NOT, AD INFINITUM.

COME, FOLLOW ME, ROLAND, TO THE DOORWAY OF YOUR DREAMS.

THIS DOORWAY OPENS THE PASSAGE TO THE MANY PARALLELS OF YOUR LIFE... DREAMS ARE A GLIMPSE OF THESE UNIVERSES.
WHEN YOU DREAM YOU ARE BRIDGING THE BARRIER THAT SEPARATES ORDINARY REALITY WITH THAT OF SEQUENTIAL REALITIES.
THIS PEARL REPRESENTS THE REALITY IN WHICH YOU PRESENTLY EXIST.
WHEN DEATH COMES TO ONE REALITY, THOUSANDS OF OTHER POSSIBILITIES ARE FORMED.
ALL I WANT IS A CHANCE TO *CORRECT* THE PAIN I'VE CAUSED IN THIS LIFE.
"ONE OF THESE PEARLS WILL GIVE YOU THAT OPPORTUNITY. EVERYTHING THAT LOGICALLY CAN HAPPEN IS REPRESENTED BY EACH INDIVIDUAL PEARL. CHOOSE YOUR NEXT LIFE."
"THE CHOICE HAS BEEN MADE."

7:58 P.M.
8:00 P.M.
8:02 P.M.
ARE YOU READY, ROLAND?
ARE YOU SORRY FOR ALL YOUR SINS?
YES.
YES, FATHER.
8:05 P.M.
8:15 P.M.

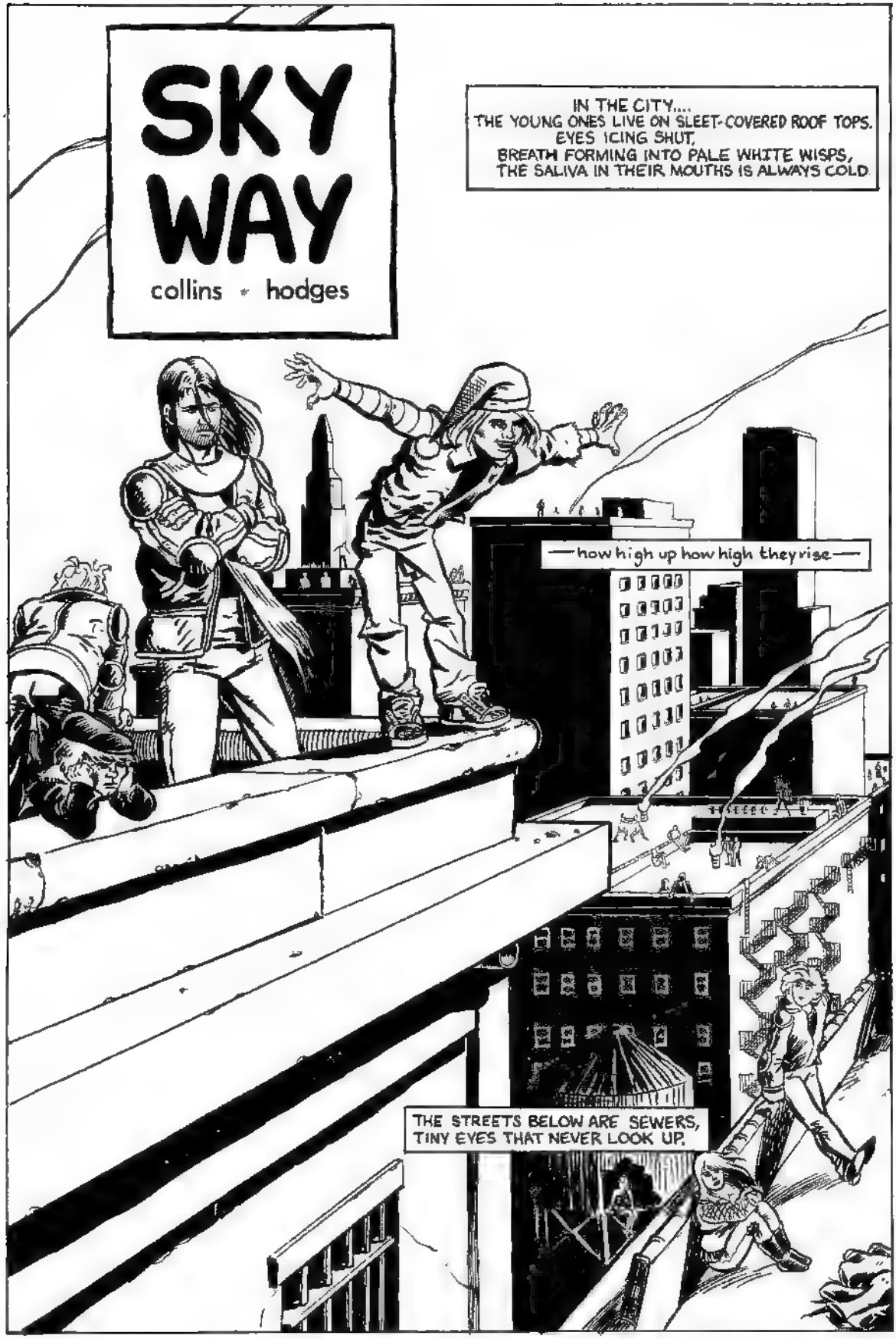
NO! ROLAND DON'T!
WHAT'S THIS?
WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
THE END?

MR. MAMOULIAN

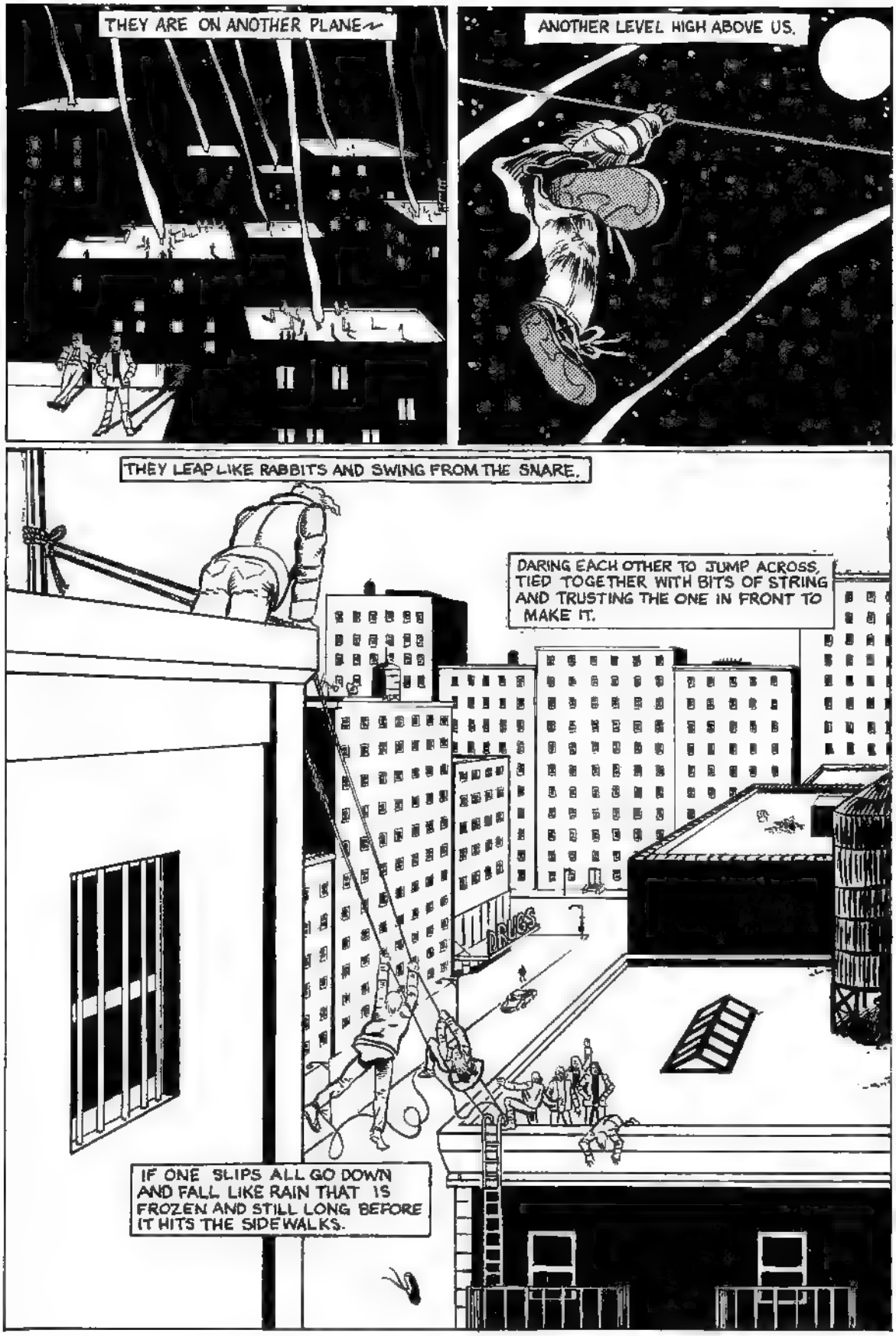
NEW ZONES OF BARENESS

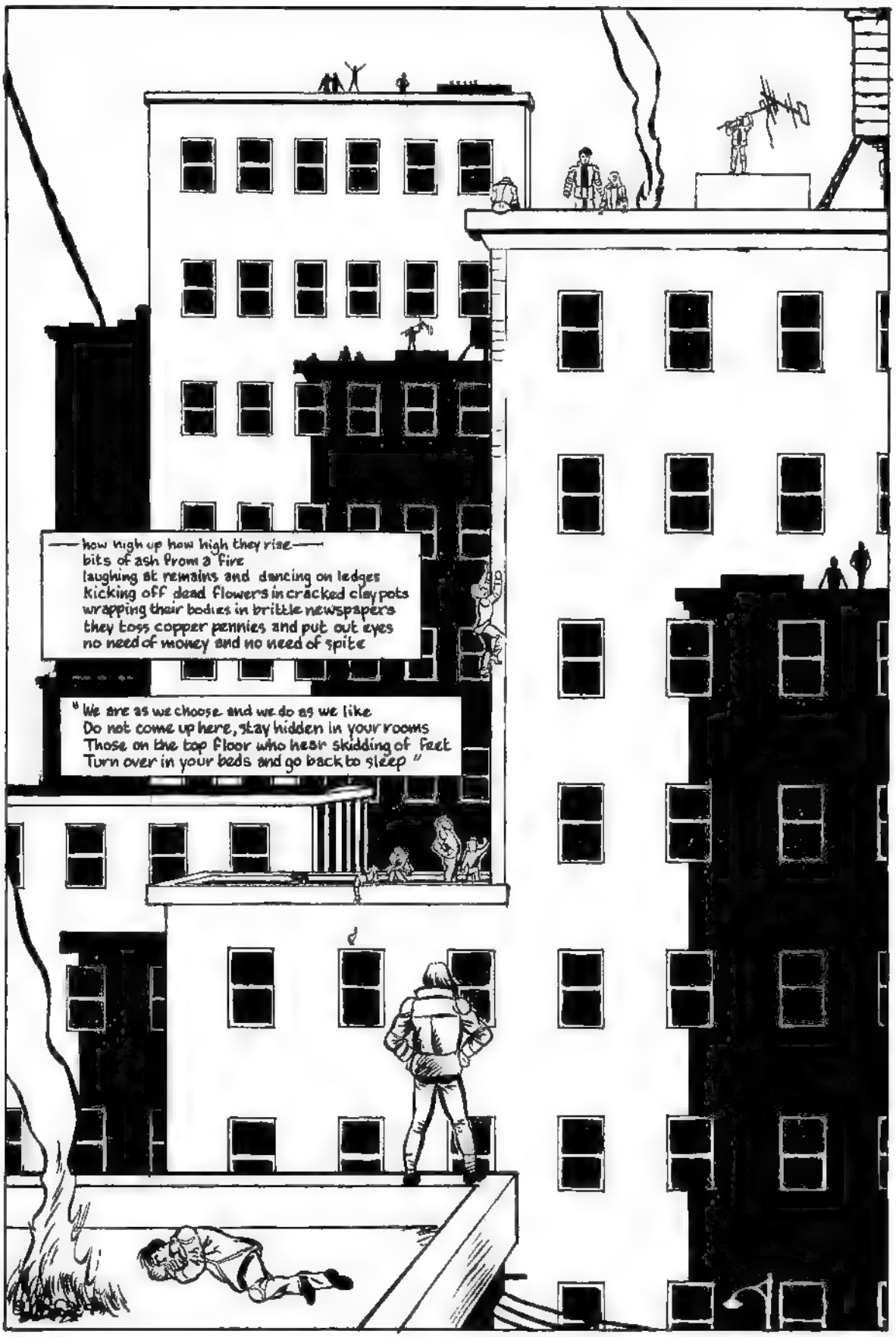
© BOLLAND 87

VOGUE
REVEALING BARENESS FOR DAY..
NATURAL NON-STOP LEGS..
SOFT AND SEDUCTIVE BARE BLACK LACE DRESS, FRILLED WITH TULLE...
SHORT SKIRTS
FROTH AND TRANSPARENCY
UNDERGROUND
ELBOW LENGTH LACE GLOVES
THE BRIEFEST BLACK DRESS WITH THE BIGGEST BOW
SHEER BLACK TIGHTS
THE LONGEST LEGS
NEW ZONES OF BARENESS
FROU-FROU SKIRT OF CHANTILLY LACE
THAT DEFINITIVE LEGGY SPRING
SHORT, TIGHT BLACK SILK BAZAR
WHIPPED ABOUT WITH NAUGHTY BLACK TULLE FRILLS
SNAKE HEELS
SHORT, SEXY STRAPLESS BLACK CHIFFON DRESS
WITH SWEETHEART CURVES
IT'S SHORTER, SHARPER, FIGURE-SKIMMING, WORN OVER NOTHING
BLACK LACE BODY WITH ILLUSORY BARENESS
THE POTENT COCTAIL OF LEATHER, LACE AND BARE SKIN
FROM LIBERATED LADY OF KNIGHTSBRIDGE

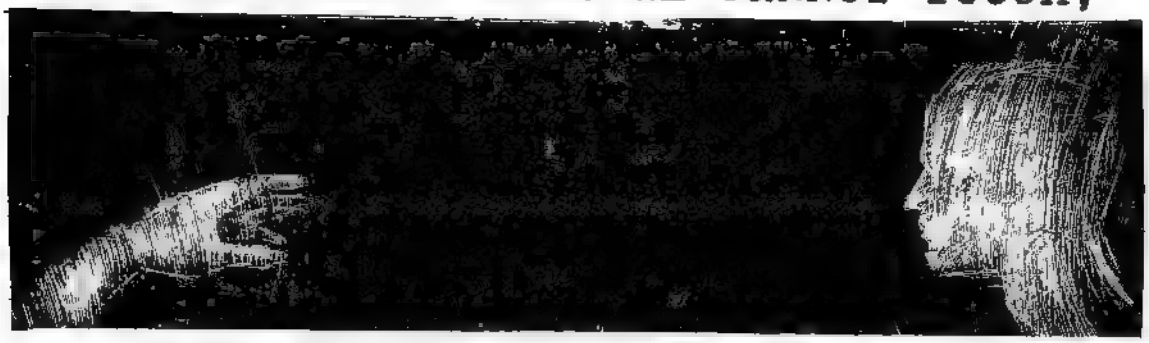

SKY WAY
collins * hodges
IN THE CITY....
THE YOUNG ONES LIVE ON SLEET-COVERED ROOF TOPS.
EYES ICING SHUT,
BREATH FORMING INTO PALE WHITE WISPS,
THE SALIVA IN THEIR MOUTHS IS ALWAYS COLD.
—how high up how high they rise—
THE STREETS BELOW ARE SEWERS,
TINY EYES THAT NEVER LOOK UP.

"WE CATCH THE BIRDS."
"WE SEND THE THIEVES"
69¢
each
"WE START THE FLAMES."
"WE ARE THE ONES HUDDLED ON FORGOTTEN BUILDINGS, THE FAINT FLICKER OF STARLIGHT WAS FROM OUR FIRES."
"FORGOTTEN ONES AND THE SWEAT FREEZES IN OUR HAIR LIKE SILVER."


THEY ARE ON ANOTHER PLANE~
ANOTHER LEVEL HIGH ABOVE US.
THEY LEAP LIKE RABBITS AND SWING FROM THE SNARE.
DARING EACH OTHER TO JUMP ACROSS, TIED TOGETHER WITH BITS OF STRING AND TRUSTING THE ONE IN FRONT TO MAKE IT.
DRUGS
IF ONE SLIPS ALL GO DOWN AND FALL LIKE RAIN THAT IS FROZEN AND STILL LONG BEFORE IT HITS THE SIDEWALKS.


—how high up how high they rise—
bits of ash from a fire
laughing at remains and dancing on ledges
kicking off dead flowers in cracked clay pots
wrapping their bodies in brittle newspapers
they toss copper pennies and put out eyes
no need of money and no need of spite
" We are as we choose and we do as we like
Do not come up here, stay hidden in your rooms
Those on the top floor who hear skidding of feet
Turn over in your beds and go back to sleep "

MR. MANDELBROT SAYS WE CANNOT TOUCH,



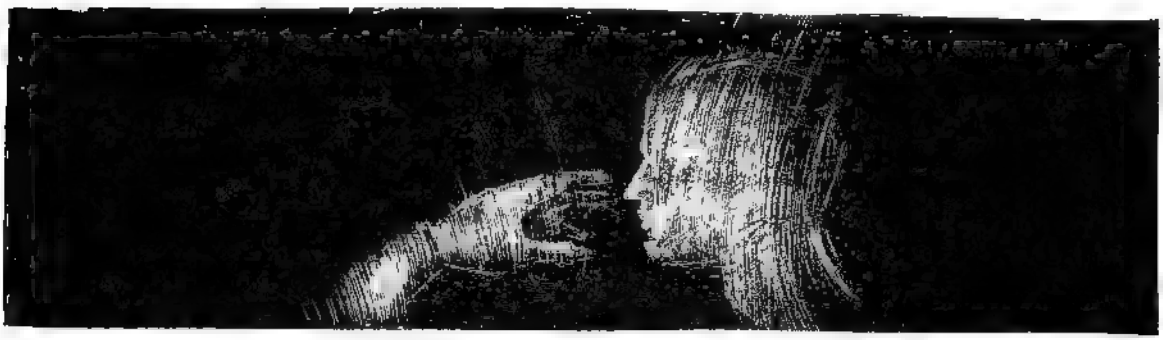
AS THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US CAN BE HALVED

AND HALVED AGAIN. HALFWAY TO HALFWAY.

INFINITELY PARCELED.

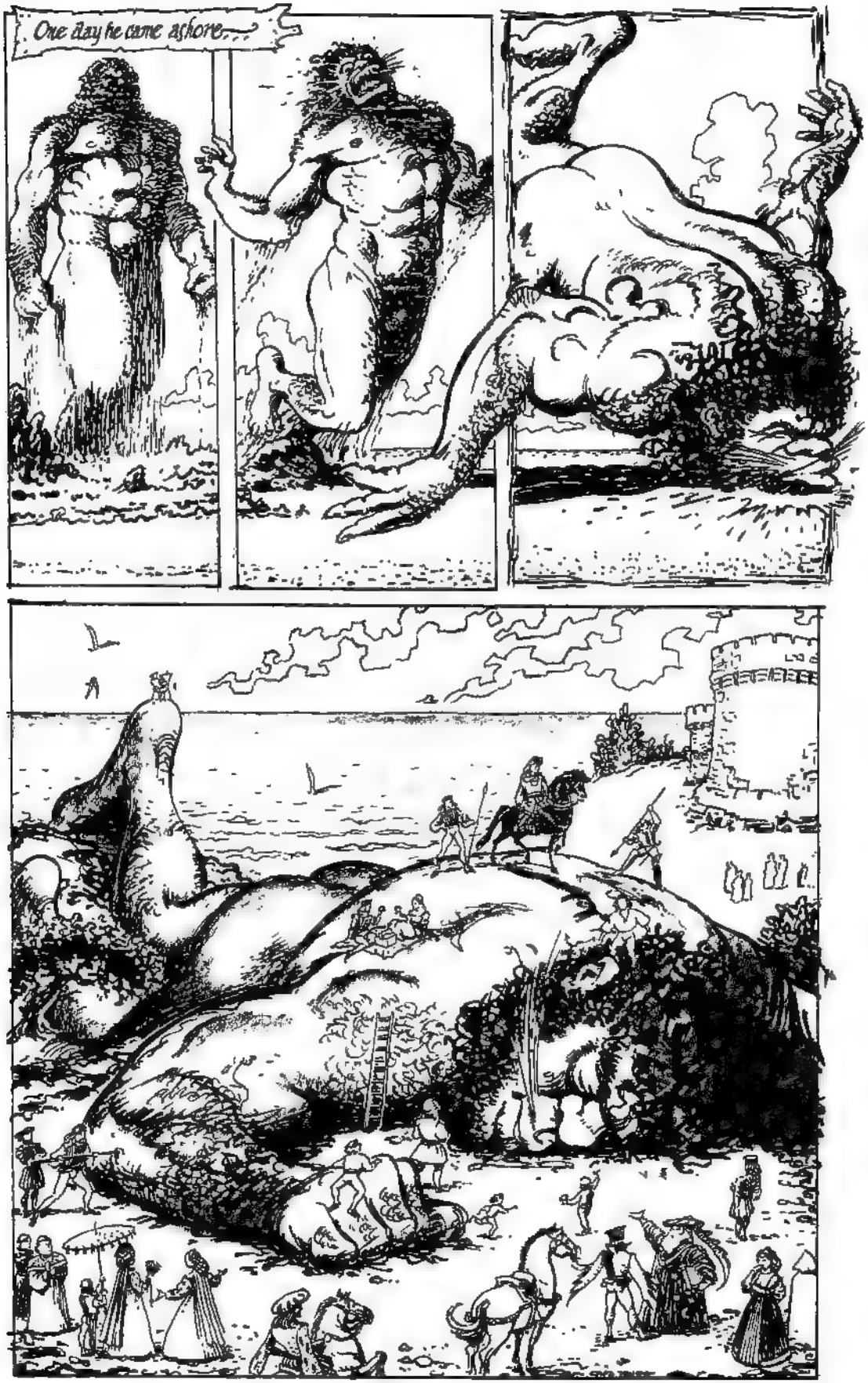
ALWAYS HALFWAY TO HALFWAY OF THE NEXT HALF.

NEVER MAKING CONTACT.



STILL, WE REACH OUT. IT'S JUST MATH.

THE GIANT
from the notebooks of LEONARDO DA VINCI, Florentine
adapted by CHAS TRUOG, Minneapolitan
Dear Benedetto, I send you this news from the east — that in the month of June a GIANT appeared from the Libyan desert!
Once upon a time he fought with the Egyptians and the Arabs, the Medes and the Persians, against ATAXERXES.
Since then he has lived in the SEA, swallowing WHALES and SEA MONSTERS, and occasionally even a whole SHIP!


One day he came ashore...

Oh miserable men, there is no shelter for you anywhere!
There is no escape from this MONSTER!
As for me, what shall I say, where shall I turn?
At present I am entombed in a monstrous belly...
... anonymous as DEATH.
FIN!

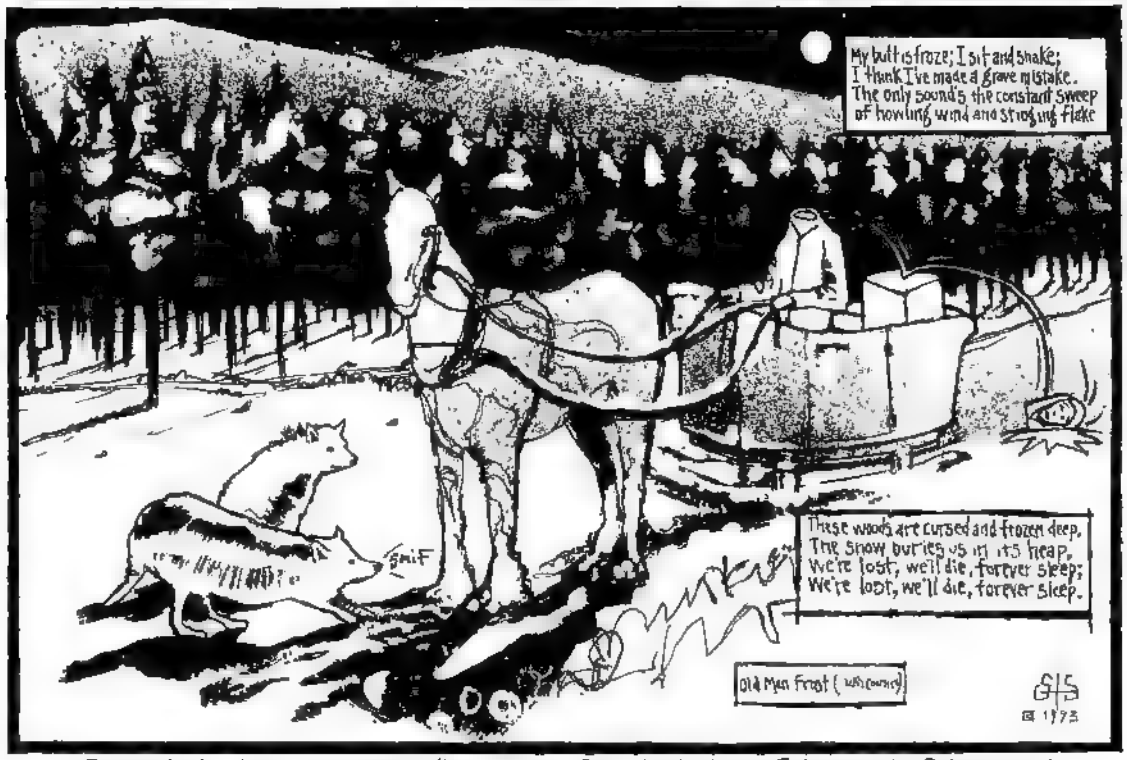
Arthur Suydam Sketchbook

CLASSICS DESECRATED

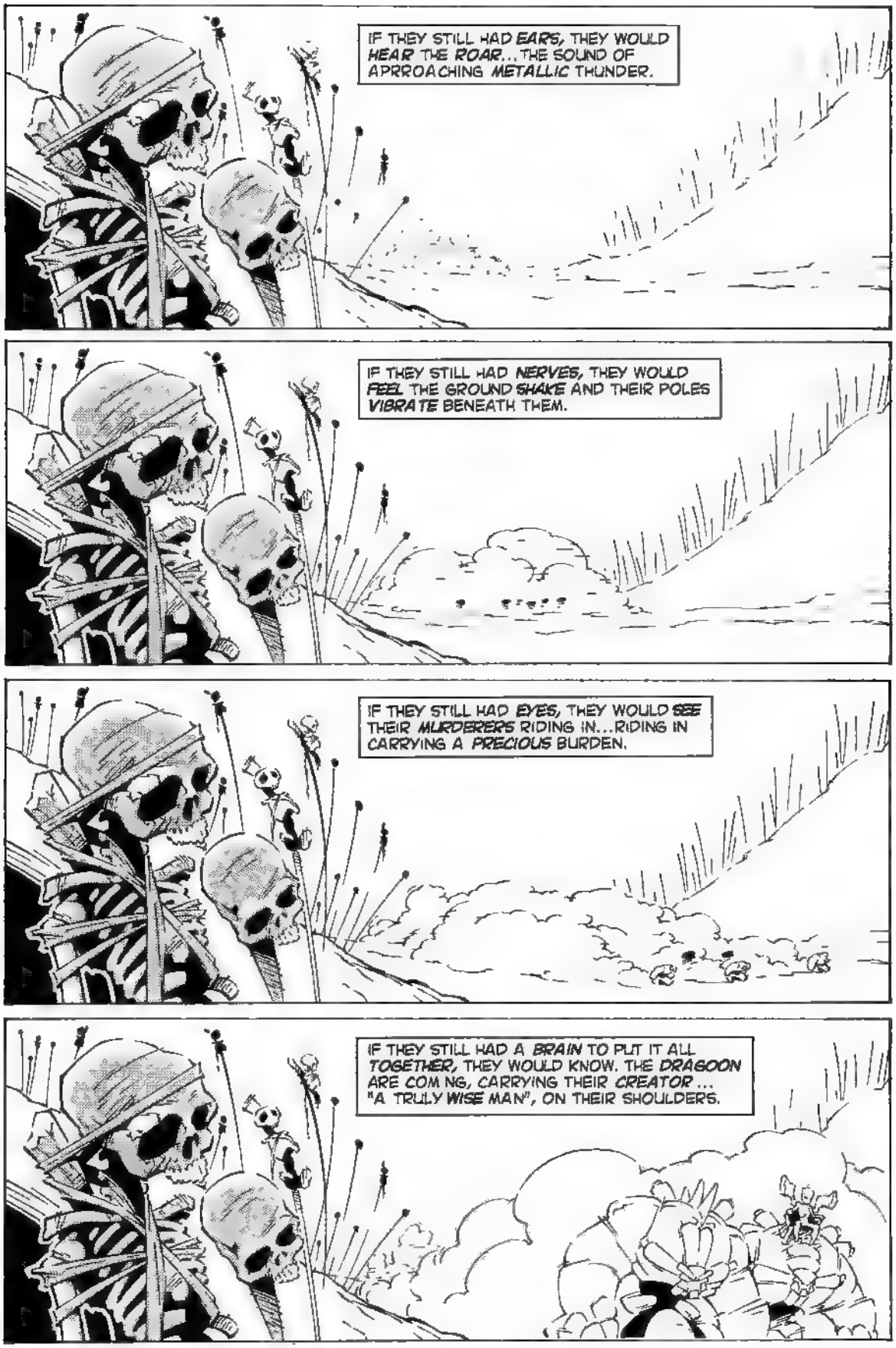
FREEZING in Woods on a Snowy Evening

"Whose woods are these?", I wish to know.
Where is his house?", I weep in woe;
No one will find me frozen here
Watching these woods fill up with snow.

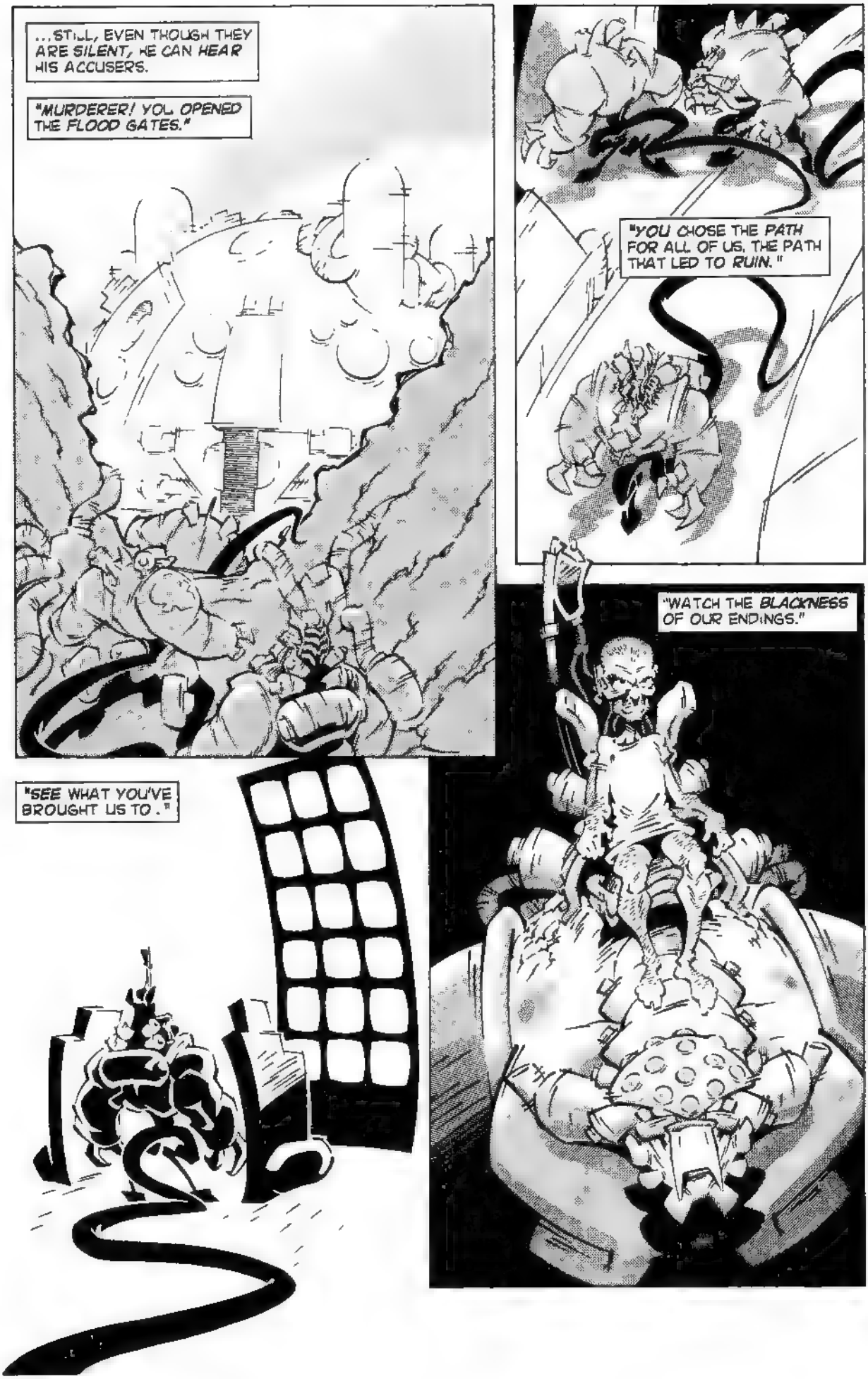
Tink
My poor old nag must think it queer
to stop with no one far or near
I can not move; I'm numbed from ache,
I fear we'll be here come next year.


My butt is froze; I sit and shake;
I think I've made a grave mistake.
The only sound's the constant sweep
of howling wind and stinging flake
These woods are cursed and frozen deep,
The snow buries us in its heap,
We're lost, we'll die, forever sleep;
We're lost, we'll die, forever sleep.
Old Man Frost (with courtesy)
SMIF
GIS
© 1973

·Defiled by Doug Wheeler · De Art by Stewart Stanyard·


IF THEY STILL HAD EARS, THEY WOULD HEAR THE ROAR... THE SOUND OF APRROACHING METALLIC THUNDER.
IF THEY STILL HAD NERVES, THEY WOULD FEEL THE GROUND SHAKE AND THEIR POLES VIBRATE BENEATH THEM.
IF THEY STILL HAD EYES, THEY WOULD SEE THEIR MURDERERS RIDING IN... RIDING IN CARRYING A PRECIOUS BURDEN.
IF THEY STILL HAD A BRAIN TO PUT IT ALL TOGETHER, THEY WOULD KNOW. THE DRAGOON ARE COM NG, CARRYING THEIR CREATOR ... "A TRULY WISE MAN", ON THEIR SHOULDERS.

AND IF THEY HAD TONGUES THEY WOULD SCREAM AT HIM IN A CHORUS, "THE WISDOM OF WISE MEN IS UNCLEAN!"
BUT THEY CAN DO NONE OF THESE THINGS, FOR ALL THEIR FLESH IS RETURNED TO DUST.
DRAGON!
STORY
GREGG KENDRICK
ART
SCOOTER


...STILL, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE SILENT, HE CAN HEAR HIS ACCUSERS.
"MURDERER! YOU OPENED THE FLOOD GATES."
"YOU CHOSE THE PATH FOR ALL OF US, THE PATH THAT LED TO RUIN."
"WATCH THE BLACKNESS OF OUR ENDINGS."
"SEE WHAT YOU'VE BROUGHT US TO."

HE HAD HEARD THIS VOICELESS LITANY IN HIS MIND AT LEAST A THOUSAND TIMES
IN THE PAST HE DEFENDED HIMSELF AGAINST ITS SILENT CRY.
BUT HE NO LONGER TRIED TO DEFEND HIMSELF NOW HE ACCEPTED HIS GUILT. JUST LIKE HE ACCEPTED OTHER THINGS HE USED TO RESIST.
"THIS ISN'T MY FAULT," HE'D SAY. "THIS ISN'T WHAT I INTENDED. I WANTED TO SAVE MANKIND."
ONCE HE FOUGHT THE DRAGOON WHEN THEY MADE HIM WATCH THEIR GAMES OF SLAUGHTER.
AT TIMES THEY HAD WIRED HIS EYES OPEN TO MAKE HIM WATCH.
THEY HAD EVEN CONSIDERED CUTTING HIS EYELIDS OFF IF HE CONTINUED TO RESIST.

HE'D THOUGHT HIS RESISTANCE *BRAVE*, BUT NOW HE SAW THE *TRUTH*. RESISTING WAS *EASIER* THAN WATCHING, AND HE *OWED* IT TO THEM TO WATCH THEIR DEATHS...
IT WAS HIS *PENANCE*. IT WAS ONE OF THE *TWO* THINGS HE HAD LEFT TO GIVE THEM.
YEARS EARLIER HE WAS GOING TO GIVE THEM THE *WORLD*. HE WAS THE WORLD'S *FOREMOST MIND* AND HE USED HIS GENIUS TO BUILD THE *DRAGOON*... MACHINES THAT COULD *THINK*, *FEEL*, AND *LEARN*.
MACHINES HE *MADE* TO BE *LIVING WEAPONS*. MACHINES HE PLACED UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE UNITED NATIONS.
THE U.N. *PRAISED* THIS AS THE DECISION OF, "A TRULY WISE MAN WHO CHANGED THE *OUTCOME* OF *ALL OUR* LIFETIMES."
IT USED THIS POWER TO *OUTLAW* WAR, AS HE'D INTENDED. THERE WAS A *NEW WORLD ORDER* AND *AGGRESSION* WOULD NO LONGER BE TOLERATED.
WITH THE *DRAGOON* AS ITS *PEACE KEEPING FORCE*, THE U.N. *FINALLY* HAD POWER... *POWER* THAT DIDN'T INVOLVE SENDING MEMBER NATIONS' TROOPS TO DIE.
"*FORCE*," IT WAS SAID, "HAS TO BE ANSWERED WITH *GREATER* FORCE. THERE ARE *THOSE* WHO WILL RESPOND TO *NO* OTHER VOICE."

HE KNEW THAT SOMEONE WOULD TEST THE U.N.'S RESOLVE AND HIS CREATIONS' ABILITY. HE TOLD HIMSELF THAT KILLING A FEW WOULD SAVE THE MANY. HE BELIEVED HE COULD LIVE WITH IT.
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY A NATION VIOLATED THE U.N.'S MANDATE. THE DRAGOON WERE UNLEASED AND OBLITERATED THE OFFENDING COUNTRY'S ARMY TO THE LAST MAN.
ALL THE REST FELL IN LINE THEN. THEY WERE TOO AFRAID OF THE ALTERNATIVE. HE HAD DONE IT.
BUT THE DRAGOON HAD LEARNED THEY LIKED KILLING. THEY DESIRED IT. THEY THOUGHT OF A WAY TO OVERRIDE THE U.N.'S CONTROL.
THEY KEPT HIM AROUND TO WATCH. HE WAS THEIR CREATOR...THEIR FATHER, AND ALL CHILDREN WANT THEIR FATHER TO SEE THEM REACH THEIR TRUE, ULTIMATE POTENTIAL.
AND THEN THEY DID WHAT THEY WERE CREATED TO DO. THEY CRUSHED HUMAN ARMIES. NOTHING COULD STOP THEM. HE COULDN'T STOP THEM.
THE ONLY REASON ANYONE WAS LEFT ALIVE WAS SO THE DRAGOON COULD CONTINUE TO KILL. THE KILLING WOULD GO ON FOREVER.
SO HE WATCHED PEOPLE DIE AND HE WEPT. IT WAS THE ONLY OTHER THING THE MAN WHO HAD ENDED WAR HAD LEFT TO GIVE THEM.

Whoa!
Check out the hair! Peeeyoww.
That's my high school yearbook picture-1974! Savannah, Georgia. Wow. Anyway, I'm Ken Meyer Jr, and this is an intro to...
PROJECT high
my nifty little autobiographical series.
It starts right here: Savannah High School, about 1972. Interesting times - Busing, integration, bad music, the whole ball o' wax.
It's called 'Project High' 'cause that's where we lived - the projects. Government-subsidized housing, that is. Cesspools. Muscle-cars.
Fred Wessel Homes was no 'hills of Beverly,' that's for sure.
Bad times-but good times, too. Maybe you'll find something you recognize, maybe not, but I hope you enjoy it!

I DON'T CARE! GO TO YOUR ROOM!
Look closely:
Stickers!
PROJECT high "Stickerville"
but.. but we didn't do anything! OWW!
C'MERE! GODDAMMIT!
Blackie, our stepfather.
Dunno why, but he seemed to hate me.
One day, though, we were lucky.
GO, STEVE, GO!
SLAM
HEY!
OWWW! DAMMIT FUKKIN' KIDS.
We had shoes on.
Ha.
Ken Meyer Jr 93

write to—
Joe Pruett
P.O.Box 672162
Marietta, GA
30067-0037

Letters Letters

OLAU BEEMER
BRUGAUUER 36 06
3704 LP ZEIST
THE NETHERLANDS
EUROPE

Dear Joe and Charles,

Okay, I'll admit, if it weren't for one of the Mad Hatter Studios' members, namely Malcolm Bourne, I would never ever have picked up the issue I've just read cover to cover, let alone picked it up in the comic-shop. Thank God Malcolm mentioned **Negative Burn** in a letter to me!

The first issue of **Negative Burn** was surprisingly good, with a great variety of stories and artwork, just like every good anthology book should contain.

Matrix 7 was a witty and light-hearted story, well-paced and without the usual big-guy talk. Artwise, Randy and Craig provided a solid piece of work, and I'm looking forward to seeing more.

The Apparition was the best story in this issue, no doubt! The story was somewhat difficult to follow, but after reading it twice, I couldn't help but scrape my jaw off the carpet. The artwork blends so well with the story, and above all, it looks so smooth! More work of James and Nathan, I tell you!

Deadaim provided some good building blocks for what might become a very well-written tale. So far, the idea of the two conflicting ideals of the twins seems interesting.

Kilroy Is Here looked intriguing, but I'll keep my final opinion to myself until I've read more of it. The art was dark, but perfectly suited for a story as grim as this one.

Both **Flaming Carrot** and **Mr. Mamoulian** weren't exactly what you'd call my cup of tea, sorry guys.

Boneshaker looks promising, although all those long vertical panels can become quite a drag after ten pages. Very unconventional art anyway, and I hope to see more of it!

Anywhichway, **Negative Burn** #1 was enjoyable, and I'm looking forward to seeing some stuff from Steve Lieber and Malcolm Boune next issue. One suggestion, though: change the flip-format into a normal one, guys (looks too much like the first issue of **Youngblood**, and I bet you wouldn't want to be compared with that, now would you?)!

*Word of mouth is one of the ways we hope people become aware of **Negative Burn**. Being from a smaller publisher, we don't have the budget for an extensive advertising campaign, so if you like **Negative Burn**, tell a friend.*

*It seems that **The Apparition** and **Boneshaker** received the most positive reaction from people who've written to us and whom we've talked to at conventions. If you'd like to see more of James' writing, be sure to pick up the **Black Mist** series when it premieres in January. Also, look for Nathan Massengill's fully-painted graphic novel, **Fenry**, from Raven Publishing—on sale now! If you liked Phillip Hester's work on **Boneshaker**, take a peek at his new art on **Swamp Thing**.*

LIBBY SINGLETON
(address withheld)

Dear Charles and Joe:

I see that my expectations for the first issue of **Negative Burn** were surpassed! Every feature was a delight and a surprise. My favorite story by a very close margin was **The Apparition**. Though it did not appear the type of work I'd normally enjoy, I found it to be very touching.

My complaints with the book are minor and have to do with the layout. Being forced to flip over a book to read the second half is a pet peeve with me. I simply hate to do it. Also, in some instances, I had trouble telling which stories were self-contained and which would be continued in the future.

Your listing of upcoming features leaves me impatiently waiting for issue number two! To please me, all you have to do is keep a variety of different but interesting offerings each issue. Good job!

*We'll try to keep each issue as varied and different as possible. As you can tell, we've abandoned the flip-cover format. It was planned all along to only have issues one and two use it. Features such as **Deadaim** and **Matrix 7** were tryouts to see if anyone was interested in seeing more. Of course with Ann Goetz's job as an assistant editor at DC and Chris Hunter's assignments from DC , it may be a little difficult to have a follow-up anytime soon.*

AMATEURISH AND HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL SCIENTIFIC METHODS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT READING "NEGATIVE BURN" MAY INCREASE ONE'S LEVEL OF INTELLECT.
CALIBER PRESS
NEGATIVE
THING-OMETER
GREG DIGENTI '93